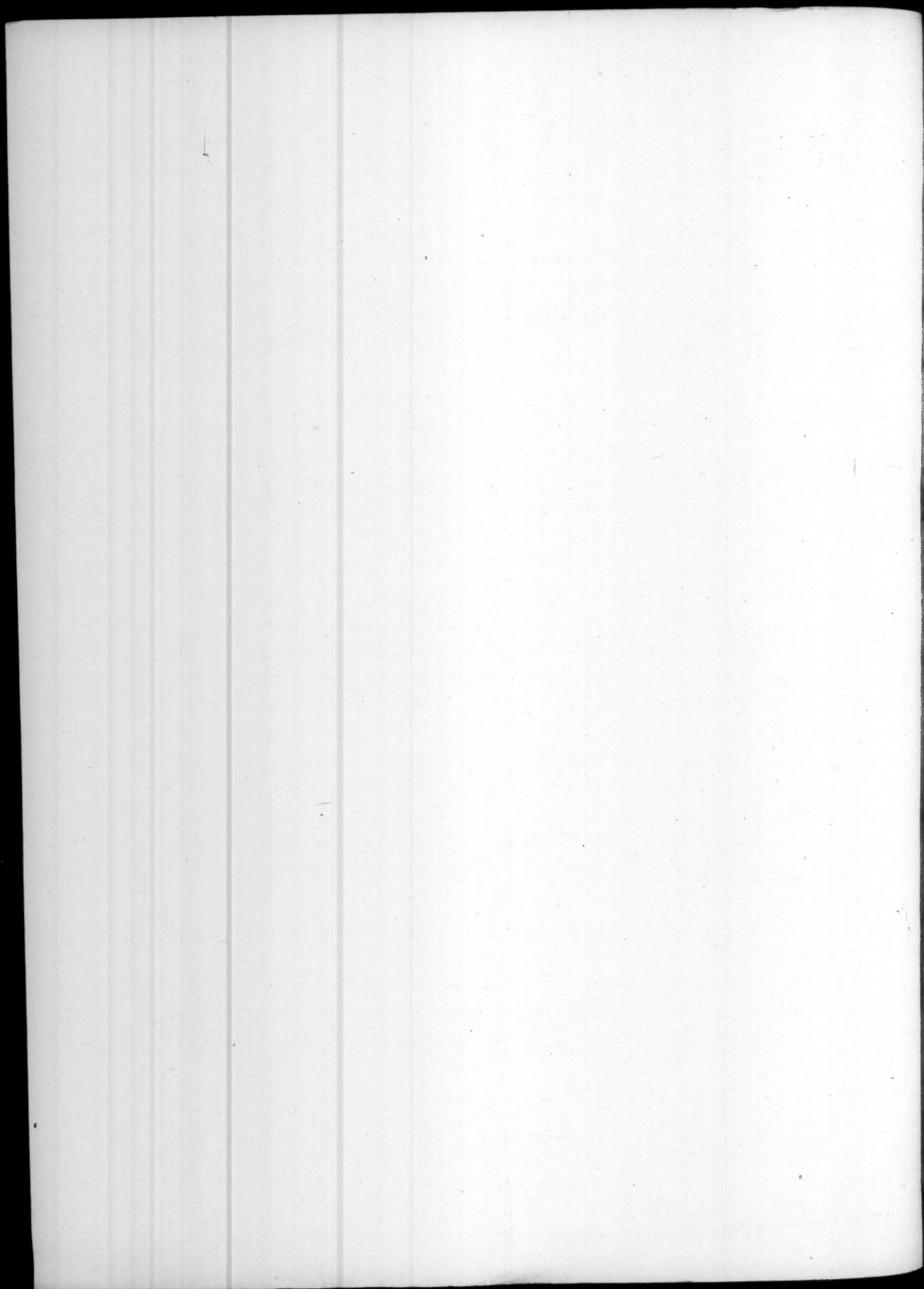

THE
PERILS
OF
POETRY.

(PRICE EIGHTEEN PENCE.)





T H E
P E R I L S O F P O E T R Y,

A N
E P I S T L E T O A F R I E N D.

Quid faciam? præscribe.—Quiescas.—Ne faciam, inquis,
Omnino Versus?—Aiò; peream male si non
Optimum erit.—

HOR.

B Y



FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE IN CAMBRIDGE.

L O N D O N :

Printed for WILLIAM GRIFFIN, in Catharine-street, in the Strand; and
FLETCHER and HODGSON, at Cambridge.

M DCC LXVI.

THE PRINCE OF BOPHTRY

EPISTLE TO A FRIEND

By the Author of the
"PRINCE OF BOPHTRY"



W. G. L.

BELOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE IN CAMBRIDGE

LONDON

Printed for William Gairdner, in Cambridge, in the Strand; and
Fletcher and Hodgson, at Cambridge.

1840

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TO THE

R E A D E R.

TH^O' the author of the following Poem is sensible that, if he complied with the Spirit of the present Times, he ought rather to apologize for a too sparing, than a too liberal use of Severities; yet as he is more desirous of maintaining the character of a good natured Man, than that of an able Satirist, he cannot refrain from acquainting the Reader with his private Reasons, for having transgressed the line which he has chalked out for himself to pursue. In short, whatever of Personality is to be found in the subsequent piece, was extorted from him by the injurious treatment, which, without having given

A them

them any provocation, he has met with, from the several persons hereafter mentioned. Mr. Green, who is the author of a *Translation of Juvenal, the Chaplain, Friendship*, and other paltry pieces, which he calls POEMS, has more than once made a very unwarrantable Use of his Name; and he is desired to apply to himself the following passage of Terence,

Tum si quis est, qui dictum in se inclementius
Existimavit esse, sic existimet,

Responsum, non dictum esse, quia *laesi prior.*

As to the *Monthly* Reviewers (for I have no Quarrel with the *Critical*, and desire that nothing, which is here said, may be applied to Them) they are so notoriously partial, ignorant, unjust, and scurrilous, that I am persuaded the public will not require of me any reasons, for having given them a little wholesome chastisement. I may possibly have subjected myself to some censure, for having condescended to take any Notice of such poor insignificant

insignificant creatures: and indeed I can make no other excuse for it, than that I wanted better employment, and did not chuse to be altogether idle. They afforded me I own some little amusement, as playing with the children did Æsop; and may I not say with him, by way of apology for such trifling,

Ludus Animo debet aliquando dari,
Ad cogitandum melior ut redeat tibi?

T H E

ADVERTISEMENT

independent character: and indeed I am not a
except for it that I wanted better
and did not choose to be altogether idle. I have
and I own some little amusement in playing with the
children and Alice, and pray I not say with any way
of apology for such trifling.

Ad coelestium imperium
I am Anne's daughter and sister

THE
PERILS OF POETRY:

AN
EPISTLE TO A FRIEND.

YES!---You are blest in every nobler part ;
Endow'd by Nature, and refin'd by Art :
From each fair flow'r, that grows on classic ground,
Each sickly shrub, in modern gardens found,
You draw with chymic skill melifluous dews,
And thro' your happy page the sweets diffuse.
Each just idea to perfection wrought,
In various stile you cloathe the various thought :
Now the full periods, spirited and strong,
Drive like a rattling thunder-storm along ;

B

And

10 THE PERILS OF POETRY.

And now so softly, musically fall,
 Th' assisting Graces seem to form them all.
 Illustrious Wit!---But, ah untimely vain!
 Ah! fond to trust these children of your brain
 To the wide world, where swollen with bestial rage
 Slander and Spite deflow'r the Virgin page;
 Where from the Critic's stony heart, th' abode
 Of ranc'rous Envy, that malicious toad,
 Spits her foul froth, and venom all abroad.

WHEN first you launch your little bark, and ride
 Down the smooth surface of the marble tide,
 Mild breathes the air, and soft Etesian gales
 In gentlest murmurs court your buxom sails;
 Sportive around, the azure Halcyons play,
 And Dolphins gambol thro' the wat'ry way.
 But soon, too soon the flattering scenes are o'er,
 And monstrous billows heave, and tempests roar;
 The black clouds burst, the forked lightnings glare,
 And angry thunders shake th' affrighted air:

Now

THE PERILS OF POETRY. 11

Now up to heav'n on mountainous waves you rise,
 While in confusion mixt are seas and skies;
 Now down to hell with tenfold force descend,
 And melt with fear, and reel at your wit's end:
 You curse the day, when credulous, and vain,
 You brav'd the dangers of the faithless main,
 And weary heav'n with vows, "Oh, once, once more
 " Give me, ye Gods, to reach the tranquil shore,
 " From this wild sea of glory far to rest,
 " With private ease, and private virtue blest!"

WHAT tho' the pencil pure Good Nature guide
 Of each fair character the fairest fide
 To give, and when a blemish'd piece you draw,
 Like great* Apelles, you conceal the flaw?
 What tho' with MASON, Simpering, Soft, and Sweet,
 In Glimmering Groves your Lady-Muse you meet;

* Alluding to a Picture of Antigonus, who happened to want an Eye, for which Reason the Artist drew him in profile, to conceal the blemish.

There

There on a Silken Sofa, Strew'd with flow'rs,
 In harmless prattle wear away the hours ;
 While your *Fond Fingers* weave, you scarce know how,
 A beauteous wreath for D' Arcy's *beauteous Brow*?
 Heav'ns, with what rancour all the critic train
 Will join, to damn your inoffensive strain,
 " 'Tis flimsy stuff, unfinew'd, nerveless, flat,
 " Trifling, jejune, insipid, *and all that!*"

OTHERS there are (Oblivion seize their name,
 Profligate Scriblers dead to truth and shame!)
 Who should your muse, in some good natur'd hour,
 But well presage of any imp of power,
 Will swear that like the rook, and chattering pye,
 She warbled for the bait that glar'd on high ;
 Want, witty want th' inspiring cause is found,
 As bagpipes owe to emptiness their sound.
 Perish the thought! --- Shall I, who, thank my fate,
 Fear no rude Bailiff thund'ring at my gate,
 Who blest with independence, blest with ease,
 Can think, and speak, and act just what I please ;

THE PERILS OF POETRY. 13

Lord of myself, shall I be Lucre's slave,
And sell my Soul, like FANNY to a Knave?
Shall I profane the Muse's sacred store,
And burn soft Incense at the shrine of pow'r?
Better be Cænis, that amphibious beau,
All trip and fidget, Butterfly and shew;
A thing by Nature made in sport, design'd
For a burlesque, and satire on mankind,
Hermaphrodite in person and in mind:
Not quite a fool, but curs'd with castrate sense,
A kind of stimulating impotence,
That makes him smart and rude, and pert and gay,
Prattling and chatt'ring like a noisy Jay:
Proud of a person, aukward, coarse, and plain,
Tho' a mere Cit of birth absurdly vain,
In cast-off airs of quality array'd,
That suit him----like my Lady's gown her maid.

AH friend you know not (Heav'n propitious grant

You still remain happy and ignorant)

C

What

14 THE PERILS OF POETRY.

What dire misfortunes every Bard has seen,
From Tommy Sternhold---down to Neddy Green;
Plague follows plague to rack the poet's life,
Printers and Dev'ls, beau * Griffiths and his wife.

* The worshipful Proprietor of the *Monthly Review*, which is made a common Vehicle for Abuse, Scurrility, and Falshood. As the Reader may be curious to know in what Manner this wretched stuff is put together, the following authentic account may not be unacceptable. In his Wife's life time (who died lately) it was in a great measure compiled by her: for as to its being the Work of a *Society of Gentlemen*, 'tis a rank falshood. When the Proprietor wants a book to be review'd, he hires any Person that falls in his way, and gives him a copy. If he is a friend of the Author's, or as it frequently falls out the Author himself, you may be sure the report is favourable: if, on the other hand, he happens to have any private pique or prejudice against the Author, he has thus an opportunity of gratifying his revenge, by damning him, and his work without mercy. If we add to this, that it is often made to *serve a Bookseller's Jobb*, we may easily account for that Partiality and Injustice which are so notorious in this Compilation. As to the Contradictions and Absurdities with which it abounds, they are in some measure pardonable, as they are not to be avoided; for the whole pamphlet is the child of Chance; it is a poor ricketty creature, that has a variety of fathers, amongst whom there is not the least intercourse, or mutuation of opinion. It always puts me in mind of a jack-pudding's coat, as it is made up of patches, that are fetched out of the Hell of half the literary Taylors in this great Metropolis. N.B. After what is said in this Note, it is unnecessary to tell the reader that the description which follows is merely fictitious. *Scriblerus.*

THE PERILS OF POETRY. 15

IN a vile Cockloft, where on every fide
Thro' plaifter'd boards full many a chink is fpi'd,
Where rude winds, whiffling thro' the fhat-ter'd roof,
Difturb the Spider's melancholy Woof,
Four defp'rate wights fit round a taper fmall,
All Wits and Critics, Men of Genius all.
One a Divine---but at no College bred,
Who wants but two fmall Gifts a heart and head;
Flippant of tongue, conceited, prone to blame,
Tho' kick'd, and cuff'd, and cudgell'd, ftill the fame;
A lying, fwearing, envious, paltry elf,
Who loves illnature, purely for herfelf;
A vain---but s'death it makes me blufh to know
That fuch a wretch may call himfelf *my* foe,
So vile an animal, a thing fo mean,
Almost below the fafh of Neddy Green.
Poor harmlefs Ned! who all the livelong day
Sings to his gentle fpoufe his gentle lay:
Sweet fpoufe, sweet lay!---and then good lack at night,
When fhe expects---poor creature he muft write!

Neddy

16 THE PERILS OF POETRY.

Neddy for shame! lay down thy pen and ink,
'Tis not for Thee, believe me man, to think;
It wastes the spirits, wears the vital clue,
And keeps from Bridget what is Bridget's due!

THE next, my friend, of this self praising clan,
Is what? an Atheist, or an Arian:
'Tis his with Ridicule's empoison'd dart
To stab reveal'd Religion to the heart;
Call Virtue Priestcraft, stigmatize the Priest,
And turn God's Truth and Gospel into jest.
Take heed, ye Sermon-wights, avoid his reach,
Forbear to publish, be content to preach:
Tho' now from Reason, now from Faith ye twine
The Cords of love to bind the Libertine,
And draw the Atheist o'er --- the task is vain,
This Afs of hell will gnaw the bands in twain,
With patient dullness will untwist the threads,
And tear your text, and doctrine all to shreds.

Two more there are, birds of the self-same feather,
 Who club their Penny-worths of wit together ;
 Poor smallware Critics, void of truth and sense,
 Whose Wall of brass is brazen Impudence ;
 Who damn all genius and desert, as stale
 And fusty Maids at Youth and Beauty rail,
 Catch every pointed lye their fame to wound,
 And bring their honour bleeding to the ground.

Good friend beware---avoid this rabble rout,
 These scavengers, that fling their filth about !
 Better, far better near Campeachy's bay,
 Thro' Groves of waving Pines to plod your way ;
 Where on the boughs malicious Monkeys sit,
 Exact Reviewers both in shape and wit ;
 Who grin and chatter, and with dirt and dung,
 Pelt the poor Travellers that scud along :
 If some indignant wight, more wroth than wise,
 Stop for revenge, they p---fs into his eyes ;
 Then skulk behind the boughs, and there unseen
 With jabbring laughter glut their brutal spleen.

IN ancient times, when thro' the plantan shade
 Of studious Academe the Muses stray'd ;
 And all their Pilgrim-sons delighted rov'd
 Thro' walks by Socrates and Plato lov'd ;
 When the great Stagyrte, to Nature true,
 From Her pure Source immortal precepts drew ;
 Great was the Critics worth, and great his fame :
 Thro' learning's spacious walks his only aim
 With fost'ring hand the feebler plants to raise,
 And feed them with the balmy dews of praise ;
 Crush the rank weeds, prune each luxuriant bough,
 And give the bolder shoots to bud and blow.
 Such once were Critics---now behold the change
 Lawless and wild like Mountain-boars they range,
 Break every fence, burst thro' the bounds of taste,
 And lay thy groves, O sacred Science, waste ;
 With ranc'rous tooth the ripening fruit devour,
 Nip the young bud, and blast the opening flow'r :
 Before them Eden smiles ; behind defil'd
 And squalid frowns a desolated wild !
 O curst, blind rage ! too sure the day's at hand,
 When thick gross Ignorance shall veil the land.

See

See where on raven wings the fiend ascends,
 While monkish Barbarism her nod attends,
 And Errour waits! See how they sail along,
 Pleas'd with the dull rough chimes of runic song,
 Wrapt in a pitchy cloud they quench the light,
 And turn meridian splendour into night!
 The Sun of learning fails; no quick'ning beams
 Dart thro' the palpable Obscure; no gleams
 Of moral beauty, moral truth are seen
 But fogs, and clouds, and horror veil the scene.
 'Twas thus in Egypt Moses wav'd his wand,
 (When rav'ning Locusts had despoil'd the land
 Of herb, fruit, flow'r) and lo black vapours came,
 And Mists Cimmerian quench'd the noon-day flame;
 In chains of darkness every Sense was bound,
 And ghastly Terror brooded all around.

CEASE then, my friend, ah cease your studious toil,
 Nor wear away in thought the midnight oil:
 How poor the meed the patient Poet gains
 For weary watches, and relentless pains!
 The Muse perhaps, when all in silent sleep,
 Is hush'd save Poesy and Love, may sleep

His soul in rapture, and before his eyes
 Spread her * bright train of visionary joys:
 Instant he sees, 'midst cold December's snow,
 The rathe Pink blossom, and the Violet glow;
 With oaten reeds the Shepherd-swains advance,
 And Nymphs in circles round the May-pole dance:
 Anon, by pensive Pleasure call'd, he roves
 By willow'd streams, dark vaults, and cypress groves,
 Where some fond Wretch bemoans his Laura's fate,
 Or love-lorn Maids their piteous tale relate:
 Now fir'd with moral Beauty's Virgin-charms,
 He flies to grasp her in his raptur'd arms;
 Clamorous in vain, the Passions plead their sway,
 And forge strong fetters to obstruct his way;
 He calls in Truth, and Reason to his aid,
 Bursts the vain bonds, and clasps the heav'nly Maid:
 Now, now he soars to more sublime abodes,
 And joins the choir of Heroes, and of Gods;
 Where copious streams of rapturous music roll,
 And Hebe's hands dispense the nectar'd bowl!

* In the following eighteen lines, the Author has endeavoured to describe
 the pleasure which is felt at a *free poetic hour*, in composing Pastoral, Elegiac,
 Ethic and Lyric Poetry.

Enchanting Scenes!-----

But ah! how soon the baseless Vision's o'er,
 And madding transports fire the soul no more!
 Down from his airy height the Bard descends,
 And fancy'd Joy in real misery ends:
 Legions of Woes by turns his heart assail,
 Hunger and Pride, "the Patron, and the Jail;"
 This curse to shun, the other curse he tries,
 And quick to Pharoah's crouded Levee flies;
 There midst a fawning crew, the Slaves of state,
 Ignobly proud, and indigently great,
 He feeds, Cameleon-like, his hopes a-while
 On the thin diet of his Lordship's smile,
 Then heaves a bitter pang, and quits the door,
 As famine-struck, and hungry as before.
 O curs'd Estate! Let Him, whose jaundic'd Eye,
 Is dazzled with such splendid Slavery,
 Or ere Ambition tempt his steps astray,
 Stop, yet a moment stop, and think on Gay!
 Gay, who, for live-long years was damn'd to wait,
 In Soul-consumption, on the worthless Great;

E

Who,

22 THE PERILS OF POETRY.

Who, as one bubble burst, pursu'd amain
The next that rose, as empty and as vain;
And found at last, a prey to sad despair,
The Courtier's promise was but painted air.

Now view the Bard, on Life's unequal plain,
Alone and friendless struggling with a train
Of hostile Cares: Prudence beholds the fray,
And like th' unfeeling Levite turns away;
Dullness and Folly smile with senseless leer,
And jealous Wit supplies a rival-sneer:
From Envy's cave bursts forth a loathsome clan,
Malice in front, and falsehood in the van;
Detraction here her lessening Tube applies,
And all his Virtues dwindle from their size;
And there, by Slander's magic lantern seen,
Each venial failing wears a frightful mein!

If yet, my friend, the Muse's firen charms
Have pow'r to hold you captiv'd in her arms;
If while the bait of Fame glares full in sight,
Nor toils can weary you, nor dangers fright,

Forgive

Forgive my zeal; while I more cautious bend
 My thoughts on Otway's life, and Otway's end.
 Poor, hapless Bard! who, form'd by Nature's care
 Of softer mold, than meekey'd Virgins are,
 Was doom'd beneath a Load of grief to bow,
 And feel the dire extremes of want and woe.
 Poor, hapless bard! Shock'd at his fate my Muse
 With tears the melancholy theme pursues;
 Sees him in rags, unfriended and forlorn,
 Of Pride the laughter, and of Wealth the scorn,
 Struggling the Wants of Nature to conceal,
 Too proud alas to beg, too just to steal,
 To a vile Inn with fainting Steps retire,
 Heave a deep sigh---then hunger-struck expire!
 Blest be his gentle Shade, for ever blest,
 Sweet Child of Sorrow, softey'd Pity's Priest;
 In whose mild heart each tender Passion dwelt,
 And taught him to describe the griefs he felt!
 And Oh be mine, when Evening shades prevail,
 Pensive to listen to his tragic tale,
 And feed my soul (as tears spontaneous flow)
 On all the poignant Luxury of woe:

While

24 THE PERILS OF POETRY

While HOLLAND, taught by Nature, feels his part,
 And wings the words unerring to my heart;
 Whether of * honour's nicest sense posselt,
 He wrings each secret from Monimia's breast,
 And warns the love-sick maid, but oh too late,
 To shun the horrors of impending fate;
 Or treads with § conscious dignity the stage,
 And cloaths each feature in contemptuous rage,
 While Jaffier, impotent his scorn to brook,
 Kneels, weeps, and prays for one forgiving look;
 In vain---he eyes him groveling in the dust,
 And spurns the Wretch, that dar'd betray his trust!

* In the Character of Chamont.

§ In the Character of Pierre.



T H E E N D.

